

Shock After JFK Death Is Recalled

Announcement Staggers World

It was 1:33 p. m. Dallas time when the announcement was made: President Kennedy had died from an assassin's bullet. For a moment the world stood still, shocked beyond belief. Five years later the recalled event still brings unbelieving stares. In the following, AP Writer Sam Summerlin, co-author with Bruce Henderson of the recently published book, "1:33" tells of that moment in Dallas and its effects upon the nation and the world.

By SAM SUMMERLIN

NEW YORK (AP) — John Fitzgerald Kennedy once said: "The only two dates that most people remember where they were are Pearl Harbor and the death of Franklin Roosevelt."

With tragic irony, John F. Kennedy added a third unforgettable date when he was assassinated in Dallas, Tex., on Friday, Nov. 22, 1963.

At precisely 1:33, Dallas time, presidential press aide Malcolm Kilduff stood before a room filled with newsmen at Parkland Hospital. Kilduff, his eyes red, an unlit cigarette in one hand, gave the fateful announcement that President Kennedy had "died of a gunshot wound in the brain."

Where were you that day at 1:33?

What thoughts or words came to you, which even today seem impossible to forget?

What did you do in that fleeting instant, which binds you forever to that day in history?

Classical historians calculate that it took two weeks for news of Julius Caesar's murder in Rome to reach Alexandria, Egypt, 1,300 miles away.

Shock Wave

But the announcement of John Kennedy's death at 1:33, Central Standard Time, flashed around the globe in less than five minutes. Only in this age of



—Photo by AP Newsfeatures.
ETERNAL FLAME AT GRAVE OF JOHN F. KENNEDY
Instant communications made shock greater.

instant communications, which have joined the earth's population into one electronically linked family, could such a shock wave have jolted the world with such speed.

Lyndon B. Johnson, closely guarded in a darkened room at Parkland Hospital, only a few feet from where Kennedy died, remembered later: "I found it hard to believe that this had happened. The whole thing seemed unreal—unbelievable. A few hours earlier, I had breakfast with John Kennedy; he was alive, strong, vigorous. I could not believe now that he was dead. I was shocked and sickened."

In Washington, John W. McCormack, the white-haired Massachusetts Democrat who as Speaker of the House was next in line to succeed the presidency after Vice President Johnson, was eating lunch in the House restaurant. Reporters told him the news. "My God! My God!" he exclaimed. "What are we coming to!"

In the Senate, Edward M. Kennedy was presiding over a dry debate on federal library services. An aide rushed in and whispered the news. "No!" gasped Teddy, and immediately left the chamber.

Leisurely Lunch

In McLean, Va., Robert F. Kennedy, then attorney general, was having a leisurely lunch with invited guests beside the pool of his suburban home. The telephone rang. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was calling. One of the guests that day, attorney Robert Morgenthau, will never forget. "While the President's brother listened to Hoover," Morgenthau recalls, "Kennedy's reaction was one of horror, I would say. We saw the attorney general clap his hand to his mouth and turn away."

A sudden hush fell across America. Clerks in department stores just started walking out. People moved as in a daze. On college campuses, students failed to show up for afternoon classes. In the lobby of the Oklahoma state capitol, a woman stood wringing her hands

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Ralph Abernathy, when she heard a bulletin on the radio, suddenly interrupted the conversation and cried: "It's just come over—President Kennedy has been shot."

At the Pentagon, an aide slipped a piece of paper to Robert McNamara, then the secretary of defense. With him that day was Dr. Jerome B. Wiesner, on leave from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to serve as Kennedy's science assistant.

Wiesner will never forget the look on McNamara's face as the secretary looked at the note. "As he read it," Wiesner remembers, "McNamara looked so frightened. He looked so upset, his face was white. The only thing I could think of was: someone has dropped a nuclear bomb."

A fourth-grader in Quincy, Mass., said with great simplicity: "There was no gayness in the United States the day it happened."

Al Rike was a young Dallas ambulance driver, who rushed to Parkland with an emergency patient just moments before the presidential motcade reached the hospital. After the President was declared dead, it fell to Rike and his companion, Dennis McGuire to place the body in a coffin.

Recalls Words

"Mrs. Kennedy was in there with us a lot," Rike recalled in an interview. "She asked me for a cigarette and I gave her one. A Secret Service man lit it for her. I said I was sorry. She said: Don't be sorry for him. He wouldn't want it that way.' Then she left. It was hard."

In Washington, the engines of government had to go on. With chilling efficiency, the U.S. Treasury cut off John Kennedy's paycheck at 2 p.m., Washington time. Kennedy had completed only 14-24ths of a computerized day's work. For the remaining 10 hours of that day, the presidential salary was paid to Lyndon Baines Johnson.

Outside the White House, a lone picket paraded by with a hand-painted sign that read: "I warned JFK and God punished him."

Market Went Wild

The Stock Exchange in Wall Street plummeted 21.16 points as measured by the Dow Jones industrial average before it was abruptly ordered closed at 2:07 p.m. One official remembers well the pandemonium on the exchange floor. "The market was going wild," he said. "It wasn't panic, but it was the nearest thing to it."

The news traveled with incredible speed. A survey of reaction to the assassination conducted by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center indicates that within 30 minutes of the President's being shot, 68 per cent of all adult Americans knew of the event; by six hours later, fully 99.8 per cent of them had learned the news.

By coincidence, the first television broadcast beamed across the Pacific from California to Tokyo was scheduled to take place that day. Instead of a recorded message from President Kennedy, startled Japanese viewers heard news of the assassination. Live U.S. television was beamed for the first time into the Soviet Union, and one female Russian commentator burst into tears. Nations throughout Europe watched television as transfixed as did Americans through the four days of mourning until the funeral in Arlington National Cemetery.

Candles Appear

In Ireland, John Kennedy's ancestral home, electric lights were flicked off and candles appeared in darkened windows. In Berlin, hundreds of thousands of West Germans marched in silence, holding torches that cast a golden ribbon of light down rain-soaked streets. Frenchmen cried openly, as did Romans along the Via Veneto.

Red China was silent on hearing the news from Dallas. Only 24 hours after the rest of the world had reacted did Radio Peking mention the assassination, and it devoted exactly 103 words to the incident. But throughout other Asian nations, there was national mourning.

Benjamin Disraeli, Britain's 19th century prime minister, once said: "Assassination has

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never changed the course of history."

But many persons can ask whether this is true now in an age of pushbutton warfare.

Violence Studied

The whole question of violence in public life, focused on the slayings of President Kennedy, his brother Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, and civil rights leader Martin Luther King, has come under increasing study by philosophers, sociologists and psychiatrists.

One question they ask: What have these assassinations done to the youth of America?

Dr. Benson Snyder, psychiatrist in chief at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, talked in an interview particularly about those of college age.

"The way that the John Kennedy assassination relates to the young people is important," Dr. Snyder says. "Most of these kids were 14 or 15 or 16 at the time of the assassination. They were at an important point in their adolescence. The guy who really spoke to them is gone. It is a difficult thing to have to deal with at that time of your life. . . . They say, 'Who is going to listen to my voice? No one cares. When someone does listen, he gets picked off.'"

'Sense of Worth'

Dr. Snyder said, "It is one of the ways of politics in the United States that people get a sense of worth by identifying with a charismatic leader, one who is young and doing things, and who gives the illusion of being able to translate your private wishes of what will happen into reality. John Kennedy was one."

"When that (charismatic leader) suddenly is removed, there is an enormous sense of loss. It's not just the loss of a person. It is the whole business of having to say 'Who is going to listen now? Maybe I won't be heard.'"

The psychiatrist says, "There is a long-term reaction of apathy and alienation. The person says: 'Well, I got burned. I'm not going to care any more.' This is a hippie philosophy; hippies are a caricature of this feeling. It is also part of suburban culture. The suburbanite is saying, 'I won't be bothered. I'm not going to cool it.'"

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Crucial Points

Dr. Snyder believes the assassination of John Kennedy occurred at a particularly crucial point in American history. "Usually, the world undergoes a slow, steady rate of change. The successful transmission of that change depends greatly on what strains are put on a system. We have seen a great change between one generation and another. It is like nothing we've seen before. It means that many of the cultural and psychological ways that we have of dealing with the world are obsolete. They actually get in the way of our view of the situation. Man has not been able to keep up with his environment. Throw in something like the loss of a major leader and the strain on the system is that much more difficult."

Now, five years later, the world looks back to that day in Dallas, and wonders how it could have happened.
